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IRELAND'S PATH
TO
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Manifesto of the Communist Party of Ireland

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PREFACE

This manifesto is Irish history and modern Irish politics as interpreted by the Communist Party of Ireland. The manifesto lays down two central propositions. The first is that the main barrier to a united and independent Irish nation is the Irish capitalist class and its dominance of the national movement. The second is that the Irish working class backed by the working farmers can alone carry the national struggle to victory. The entire work of the Irish Communist Party is based on these two propositions of the Manifesto.

The working masses of nationalist Ireland cannot take a single step in the fight for an Irish Republic without coming into conflict with the vested interests of their own capitalists, whether factory owners, graziers or financiers. In the imperialist area of the Six Counties the social demands of the workers bring them into conflict with British imperialism, as demonstrated in the great upheaval of the unemployed masses in October, 1932. Today, in the Irish working class is joined the fight of the Irish nation for freedom and of the exploited for social emancipation from capitalism.

This manifesto is the embodiment of this combination—as James Connolly put it, "of all the forces of economic and political discontent." Its adoption by the Inaugural Congress of the Communist Party of Ireland this year marks a big step forward by the Irish working class in the creation of an independent revolutionary workers' movement.

The path from national oppression and social misery for the Irish people to the Workers and Farmers' Republic is that of this manifesto of the Irish Communist Party.

SEAN MURRAY.

Ireland's Path to Freedom

WORKING MEN AND WOMEN OF IRELAND!
FELLOW FIGHTERS FOR IRISH FREEDOM!

NEVER before have conditions been so favorable for complete liberation of Ireland from English rule.

The present world economic crisis is ruining millions of workers and peasant farmers, forces of revolution unequalled in history are gathering and maturing in all countries, and the world is entering a new period of wars and revolutions. This gives revolutionary Ireland a mighty international ally such as it never had in former times.

The tremendous flood of international revolution, made up of socialist revolutions in the foremost capitalist countries, of bourgeois revolutions in the backward countries where strong relics of medieval feudalism still remain, of the risings for national independence in the colonial and semi-colonial countries—this tremendous flood of international revolution will inevitably draw the Irish people into its current, with their enormous experience of almost two centuries of revolutionary struggle.

The National Revolutionary Struggle in History

For the last 200 years the history of Ireland has been the history of the hard and stubborn fight of the Irish people for national freedom. In rising after rising the Irish people have tried to tear themselves away from English oppression and at all times the Irish people have sought to find allies in the liberation movements of other countries.

No big revolutionary event has taken place in world history with-

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out the Irish people trying to unite their national revolutionary independence movement with the international revolutionary movement. The Volunteer Movement of 1782 arose in unison with the revolutionary movement for the liberation of the American colonies which had revolted against English rule.

The 1798 rising followed on the great French Revolution. The 1848 rising was an integral part of the European revolution and was allied to the Chartist Movement. The 1867 rising reflected the revolutionary situation which arose all over Europe in the sixties of last century. The 1916 insurrection was the first revolt against the imperialist war, against English Imperialism and consequently was a prologue to the international proletarian revolution which took place in Russia in 1917.

The whole of Irish history and the experience of its revolts, prove convincingly that no successful uprising of the Irish people, and consequently, no liberation from English slavery is possible without an alliance with the international revolutionary movement. This important lesson, bought with the blood of hundreds of thousands of fighters who perished heroically in the struggle for the independence of Ireland, must form the basis of the further struggle of the Irish people for their liberation from English imperialism.

The hour for the final liberation of Ireland is very near!

But who will lead the Irish people to the revolutionary liberation struggle? Which class will stand at the head of this struggle? Which class is capable of carrying this struggle to a definite finish?

Irish Capitalism Betrays the Struggle

Is the Irish capitalist class capable? The whole history of the Irish national movement proves that the capitalist class has been disloyal to the national cause, bargained and made agreements with the British Government at the expense of the interests of workers and peasant masses, time and again betrayed the struggle for freedom. Even during the 1782 Volunteer Movement—a movement led by the rising Irish capitalist class of the period—this class came to terms with the British, obtained some concessions for themselves, voluntarily disarmed their bourgeois detachments (Merchant Corps and Lawyers Corps), and

started violently to disarm the detachments recruited from among the workers (Liberty Corps) which did not wish to lay down their arms.

In 1798 the Irish capitalists and landlords, frightened by the spirit of Jacobinism which was more and more penetrating the revolutionary movement headed by the United Irishmen, took a direct part in the brutal suppression of the insurrection and in the literal sense of the word sold Ireland to England in a Parliament consisting of the leading capitalists and landlords for a bribe of £1,260,000 (the vote in the Irish Parliament for union with England).

In the National movement of the first half of the 19th century, O'Connell, as the leader of the right wing of the Irish capitalists and the Catholic landed gentry, made himself known as the bitterest enemy of the peasantry, whose actions against the landlords he called "agrarian crimes."

In 1824-25 he violently opposed the Trade Unions and sent the police against the Dublin workers, exhorted the police to fire on the workers who were demonstrating for the dissolution of the Union. The native capitalist class and middle class generally through O'Connell diverted the national struggle of the people into a struggle for Catholic emancipation and later in the bourgeois Repeal Association put forward the slogan of federation under the English Crown.

The left-wing of the bourgeoisie which split away from the Repeal Association and formed the Irish Confederation, although declaring for independence, nevertheless, opposed revolutionary methods of struggle and advocated the same strictly legal methods of O'Connell. The Confederation held back the Dublin workers after John Mitchel's arrest, and when compelled to take the field sacrificed the people's revolution in the interests of private property.

The Fenian Rising in 1867 was a movement of the proletarians in the towns (factory workers, office workers, lower intellectuals and part of the rural laborers), but the leadership was in the hands of petty bourgeois intellectuals, and therefore, though the movement was directed not only towards winning political independence for Ireland, but also against the landlords, bourgeoisie and the priests, there was an absence of clarity in the pragram, in particular, a failure to under-

stand the interconnection between the agrarian and the national revolutions.

The capitalist class sacrificed the national independence movement and the farmers' struggle against landlordism in return for English Liberal promises of Home Rule. Led by Redmond, Devlin, O'Brien, and Healy, this class carried its treachery to Ireland to open support for the British Empire during the imperialist war of 1914-18, and together with the imperialist capitalists led by Carson came out in open hostility against the 1916 rising.

The Lessons of the Struggle

The rising of 1916 and the movement which succeeded it ending in the Treaty of 1921, and the division of Ireland into two capitalist states, has put a seal upon the national treachery of the Irish capitalists and brought out as never before the impossibility of further entrusting the conduct of the national struggle to the leadership of the Irish middle class.

It was the workers' army led by Socialists like Connolly, representing the class conscious workers of the capital which constituted the vanguard of the insurrection. It was the representatives of the bourgeoisie, the wing led by Griffith, MacNeill and Hobson, which betrayed the insurrectionary movement on the very eve of the uprising.

It was the compromising hesitations of the petty bourgeois leaders (de Valera & Co.), which resulted in handing over the leadership of the Republican Movement on the morrow of the insurrection to the bourgeois leaders who had opposed it, deserted and betrayed it. (Griffith and MacNeill.)

The men who had stood by the employers in the great workers' upheavals of 1907, 1911 and 1913 (Griffith & Co.), who bitterly denounced Trade Unionism, the class struggle of the workers and Socialism as aiding the imperialists, were the leaders of surrender to British imperialism in 1921-22.

The middle class Sinn Fein Movement was the agency by which the Irish capitalists held back the laboring masses in the anti-imperialist struggle, called off the strike of the railwaymen against the transport of British troops, which protected the landlords and ranchers and sup-

pressed the revolutionary movement of the laborers and peasant farmers in the struggle for land. (Dail Eireann reports.)

The 1921 betrayal was no accident of individual leaders being bribed or bought by the British. It was the inevitable outcome of a struggle in which the leadership was in the hands of a class who feared that the complete triumph of the National Independence Movement would not halt at national separation but would develop into a social revolution, resulting in the overthrow of the Irish capitalist class and the establishment of a Workers' and Farmers' Socialist Republic.

The 1921 betrayal is the outcome of the treachery of the Irish capitalist class and the vacillation of the lower middle class who were incapable of leading a sufficiently resolute struggle against the Treaty capitulators to imperialism.

The rich revolutionary experience of the Irish people's fight for liberation from the English yoke gives the further lesson that Irish capitalism always betrayed the independence movement for their own selfish class interests.

The entire history of the national struggle under the leadership of the Irish capitalists is one of bargains with the English, obtaining concessions for the Irish capitalists at the expense of the people's movement for national freedom.

The class interests of the Irish capitalists is shown without question by the whole history of Ireland to be contradictory to the complete liberation of Ireland from the English yoke. The Irish capitalist class is not only incapable of being at the head of the National Independence Movement, but this movement can only be victorious through struggle against Irish capitalism.

The Peasantry and the Struggle

Are the peasant farmers capable of leading the revolutionary national struggle and carrying it to a finish?

No, they are not capable. In the history of Ireland the tenant farmers have more than once come forward as a big revolutionary force. They formed revolutionary peasant organizations (the White Boys, the Hearts of Steel, the Moonlighters, etc.), which carried on

a stern struggle against the English and Irish landlords and took a powerful part in the Independence Movement.

But like the peasants of other countries, the Irish tenant farmers were not able to rise to the level of an independent movement owing to their scatteredness, the impossibility of uniting their forces, and organizing them for a planned struggle led from one center.

The revolutionary Farmers' Movement in Ireland can only become a powerful and decisive force under the leadership of another revolutionary class which is in such conditions that it can organize its forces—only in alliance with such a class.

The experience of the 1848 rebellion, when both of these revolutionary streams united in the person of John Mitchel and Finton Lalor, acting in sharp opposition to the capitalists and landlords, shows by what path victory is possible for the revolutionary movement in Ireland, but at the same time discloses the causes of the defeat of the 1848 rising.

Only an alliance of the proletariat and the peasants, under the leadership of the former, can produce sufficient power for the victory of the revolution.

The defeat of the 1848 rebellion is explained firstly by the fact that both classes were insufficiently conscious of their aims, with the resultant indecision during the struggle, and secondly, that the proletariat did not understand its leading role and did not stand out as an independent force in the general masses of the democratic revolution.

The Working Class Alone Can Lead the Struggle

In all Irish uprisings the Irish workers have taken a most energetic part. The armed bands of workers (Liberty Corps), in 1784, tens of thousands of armed workers in the Society of the United Irishmen, who fought in 1798 and organized a further insurrection in 1803 under the leadership of Emmet, the rebellion of 1848, the Fenian rising in 1867, in which two-thirds were factory and office workers, the Citizen Army in the 1916 rising which consisted of workers attracted towards Socialism and Internationalism—such were the chief stages of the Irish workers' movement in the national independence struggle.

In spite of the fact that at all these stages of the national liberation movement the working class did not succeed as yet in spreading itself as an independent class force; the history of this movement shows that this class is the only revolutionary class capable of an irreconciliable struggle for national freedom, and therefore, capable of standing at the head of this movement as its leader. The working class has become able to assert itself as an independent class force through its growing concentration in the factories and the towns, its property-less nature, and therefore its freedom from adherence to private property and its ability to move independently and exert its leadership over the other national forces.

National Liberation Leads to Social Liberation

The class interests of the proletariat drive it further than the national independence of Ireland towards the social liberation of the toiling masses—to Socialism. For the proletariat the national liberation of Ireland is an inevitable task which it will carry out on the way to Socialism.

Between the national and social liberation of the toiling masses of Ireland there is no contradiction, as is usually claimed by bourgeois politicians. On the contrary, it is just because the chief task of the proletariat is Socialism that it is capable of carrying the national fight with England to a finish.

The Irish working class will carry on the national independence struggle to the end, attaching to itself the mass of peasant farmers, so as to crush the power of resistance of the English imperialists and overcome the unreliability of the Irish capitalist class.

The Irish proletariat will bring about a socialist revolution, attaching to itself the masses of semi-proletarians in the population, so as to break the power of resistance of the capitalists and render harmless the unreliability of the peasants and the petty bourgeoisie.

At the head of the peasants for an independent Ireland, at the head of all the toilers and the exploited for a Workers' and Farmers' Irish Republic, for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat—such is the historic task given to the Irish working class by the whole of the present

alignment of class forces in Ireland and the position of the Irish national independence movement as an integral part of the international revolution.

The Tasks of a Revolutionary Workers' Party

The Irish proletariat can carry out these historic tasks only by standing out as a political force, creating a revolutionary workers' party —the Communist Party—independent of the political parties of the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie.

No other class but the proletariat and no other party but the Communist Party can bring about the national social liberation of the Irish people.

The election of de Valera to power reflects the tremendous growth of discontent among the masses, caused by the calamities brought about by the world economic crisis. The toiling masses of Ireland are rising to a new struggle. A new upsurge of the revolutionary national independence movement is commencing.

The formation of the Communist Party of Ireland is an essential step in the struggle of the Irish people for independence. The weakness of the working class in the national liberation movement of the past has been the absence of a strong revolutionary class leadership in the form of a revolutionary class party. The building of a mass Communist Party of Ireland is a prime task facing the Irish working class.

But the national struggle against Britain is being directed by the Fianna Fail Party along the line of compromise, capitulation, and betrayal. The de Valera Government is utilizing the revolutionary upsurge of the Irish masses for the purpose of securing economic and fiscal advantages to the capitalists and politically to remove the more nakedly imperialist features of the Treaty of surrender, such as the Oath of Allegiance.

It has shown its willingness to compromise on the issues of complete separation, the unity of the country and the disputed financial tributes. The de Valera Government has shown itself a capitalist government, placing the interests of the Irish capitalist class above the interests of the masses of the Irish people in the struggle against England.

It has protected the imperialist capitalist interests on the railways (writing off the capital of the small investors, strengthening the position of the monopoly interests in rail and road transport through its legislation), and has proved itself the instrument of the capitalists in reducing the wages of the railwaymen and breaking their heroic strike struggle.

The de Valera Government has shown itself not a government of resolute national struggle against Britain, but a government of national compromise and the custodian of the interests of Irish capitalism in its class offensive against the Irish workers (denying unemployment insurance to the unemployed, cutting wages on relief work, reducing teachers' and lower Civil Servants' salaries).

The de Valera Government is revealing itself as an enemy of the poor farmers in the struggle against the payment of annuities, mortgages and taxes. It has conciliated with the imperialist exporting interests in agriculture by a policy of subsidies at the expense of the masses of the people. Its policy of tariffs and industrialization is directed to the strengthening of the Irish capitalists at the expense of the Irish workers, without in any way fighting the vital interests of the imperialists in Ireland.

The National League, headed by Devlin and Healy, pursues out of office a policy of naked betrayal of the independence struggle. By means of demagogic appeals to religious prejudice it holds the national masses under its influence from any serious struggle against imperialism.

The bankruptcy of petty bourgeois nationalism to lead the anti-imperialist struggle and solve the question of Irish unity is most clearly portrayed in the treacherous policy of the National League and the admission of de Valera that he "sees no solution for this problem."

Only a revolutionary class struggle against the entire Irish capitalist class can unite the masses of the Irish workers and farmers and lead to the abolition of the imperialist border, to a united, independent Ireland.

The Fianna Fail Party (and its National League counterpart) has shown itself incapable of standing at the head of the mass movement for national liberation. It is incapable because it is a party of

National Reformism standing for the interests of the manufacturing capitalists whose opposition to British imperialism is subordinated to its fight for profits from the Irish workers.

The struggle for National independence can only be successful to the extent to which it breaks through the shackles imposed on it by the national capitalist Party of de Valera and treads the path of revolutionary struggle led by the working class with its own class party.

WORKERS OF IRELAND!

You are the class on whose shoulders will fall the great task of leading the masses of the nation to their emancipation from the British imperialist yoke.

You are the class which alone can produce the movement which will emancipate all toilers from the social slavery which the rule of the capitalists imposes on the working people.

To carry out these great tasks, you, the working men and women of Ireland, must organize your forces, create your own party to lead the struggles—the Irish Communist Party.

No other class can lead the nation to independence. No other party but the party of the working class, the Communist Party of Ireland, can lead the toilers to the goal of national freedom, to the unity of the North and South, to the overthrow of capitalism, to the emancipation of labor, to the dictatorship of the working class in alliance with the working farmers—the Workers' and Farmers' Republic.

History is on the side of Ireland's struggle. The capitalist system is collapsing. The workers' system, Socialism, is triumphant in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. Revolution is growing alike in the subject nations and in the imperialist countries.

Fellow workers of Ireland! Forward to the building of a powerful Communist Party of Ireland which will lead to the destruction of national and social oppression for ever.

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